

WVCW aims to go FM

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The next time you listen to WVCW, VCU's radio station, think about what it would be like to hear it broadcast with the clarity and power of your favorite FM station. The staff at WVCW are making plans to get an FM frequency, so that they can be accessible to a larger audience.

WVCW is broadcast in Rhoads and Johnson halls, Gladding Residence Center, the Student Commons and Hibbs Cafeteria on 640 AM. With a subscription to Continental Cable, you also can hear the station on 105.3 FM.

The station serves as a training ground for mass communications students, or anyone interested in the world of broadcasting. Several WVCW student employees also work either part time, full time, or as an intern at local Richmond radio stations.

One WVCW staff member interned at MTV, picked from 2,000 applicants to work for the multi-million dollar music video

station.

It's not just the disc jockeys who get exposure over the airwaves of WVCW. College bands such as the Smashing Pumpkins, Radiohead, Cracker and Plan B are being aired and could perhaps become big name bands like R.E.M., U2, Jesus Jones and Soul Asylum.

General Manager Robert Fleskes said, "The job of college radio is to find new bands who, 10 years down the road, might be old bands that everybody knows of."

So, if you hear a name like Buffalo Tom, don't assume it's a Western-style movie character. Buffalo Tom is actually one of many bands given exposure on the post-modern format at WVCW.

This doesn't mean you will hear only post-modern music on WVCW. The station also produces shows that include Rhythm and Blues/Dance music, Alternative music, news and sports.

To some VCU students, however, eating breakfast while listening to post-mod-

WVCW continued to page 8 ▶

WVCW

Continued from page 7

ern music is not a pleasant college experience. Comments on Hibbs' Cafeteria Bulletin Board indicate their dislike of the format.

Fleskes shrugs his shoulders when hearing of this opposition.

"There's 22,000 people who go to school here," Fleskes said, adding that he hopes the music programs WVCW produces satisfy their mainstream audience.

"There's so many diverse people here, and everybody is going to like something different."

The station is in its 27th year at VCU. They were previously located in the Millhiser House on West Franklin Street, moving to the General Purpose Academic Building three years ago. With the relocation, the station got state-of-the-art equipment, and was finally able to work with the luxury of heating and air conditioning.

Everything about WVCW seems as groovy as the Brady Bunch poster hanging in their studio, until you stop to consider the lack of an FM frequency.

Despite the fact that VCU is the only accredited School of Mass Communications in the state, we have remained off the FM frequency. Yet, the University of

Richmond, which does not have a communications school, broadcasts on 90.1 FM, allowing listeners to tune in throughout the Richmond area.

If you were to leave the VCU campus you would also leave the WVCW broadcasting area.

Even some students on campus are unable to receive the transmission, as the Rhoads Hall transmitter is currently broken.

Despite the \$30,000 the Student Government Association allocated to the station last May, the task of getting an FM frequency is not an easy one.

The money will be used to hire a consultant who will research the frequencies that are available, and once approval is given for an FM frequency, the station must raise money or collect donations to fund the cost of staying on air.

Because there is a high demand for FM frequencies, the competition is fierce.

"The longer we wait, the less chance we have," Fleskes said. "If I win the lottery, I guarantee that I'd pay it off — that's how bad I want it."

Fleskes said that VCU community support for the proposed frequency could help the station's chances. Students could help by writing letters to the Division of Student Affairs and Student Media Commission.